WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A multi-user virtual tape system comprising:

at least one server adapted to execute a plurality of tape application programs;

a random access storage device; and

a controller providing communications between said at least one server and said random access storage device, said controller configured so that said application programs can concurrently access said random access storage device as a sequential access tape storage device.

2.   The multi-user virtual tape system according to claim 1 further comprising:

a virtual tape volume configured on said random access storage device for tape formatted data;

a write-enabled one of said tape application programs designated to perform a record of tape formatted data to said virtual tape volume; and

a write-protected one of said tape application programs designated to perform a playback of tape formatted data from said virtual tape volume,

said controller allowing said playback to operate during said record.

3.   The multi-user virtual tape system according to claim 2 further comprising a virtual tape drive defined by said controller so as to emulate a physical tape drive to said tape application programs.

4.   The multi-user virtual tape system according to claim 3 further comprising:

a first one of said tape application programs having performed a write operation after said virtual tape volume is initially mounted in said virtual tape drive,

said controller designating said first one of said tape application programs as said write-enabled one of said tape application programs.

5.   A multi-user virtual tape system according to claim 4 wherein at least one said tape application programs is able to perform one of a load operation and an unload operation on said virtual tape volume independent of others of said tape application programs.

6.   A multi-user virtual tape system comprising:

a data portion of disk storage formatted as a tape volume;

a plurality of application programs in communications with said disk storage; and

a plurality of pointers each independently indicating tape block positions within said tape volume, said application programs corresponding to said pointers so as to enable said application programs to concurrently access said tape volume.

7.   The multi-user virtual tape system according to claim 6 further comprising: .

a virtual tape drive adapted to emulate a physical tape drive to said application programs,

said tape volume being mountable in said virtual tape drive.

8.   The multi-user virtual tape system according to claim 7 further comprising:.

a plurality of initiators associated with said pointers,

said application programs associated with said initiators.

9.   The multi-user virtual tape system according to claim 8 wherein each of said initiators targets said virtual tape drive.

10.   A multi-user virtual tape method comprising the steps of:

providing disk storage;

defining a virtual tape volume on said disk storage;

associating said virtual tape volume with a virtual tape drive; and

concurrently communicating tape formatted data between said virtual tape drive and a plurality of application programs.

11.   The multi-user virtual tape method according to claim 10 comprising the further steps of:

defining a virtual tape drive target; and

providing said application programs concurrent access to said virtual tape volume through said virtual tape drive target.

12.   A multi-user virtual tape system according to claim 11 comprising the further steps of:

providing a plurality of initiators associated with said application programs;

establishing communications between each of said initiators and said virtual tape drive target so as to access said virtual tape volume data concurrently.

13.   A multi-user virtual tape system according to claim 10 comprising the further steps of:

defining a plurality of virtual tape drive targets; and

providing said application programs concurrent access the said virtual tape volume through said virtual tape drive targets.

14.   A multi-user virtual tape system according to claim 13 wherein said providing step comprises the substep of associating each of said application programs with a corresponding different one of said virtual tape drive targets so as to access said virtual tape volume concurrently.